WIZARD
NO. 1/2
MARVEL COMICS
HERE COMES...
DAREDEVIL
THE MAN WITHOUT

MARVEL ENTERPRISES

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On a mild winter night, in a nondescript harbor on New York's lower west side, atop a pier that had seen better days, two men met to discuss the fate of a third.

THE DEVIL DISCUSSED

To know Daredevil is to know the man behind the mask," began the larger of the pair - a massive figure named Wilson Fisk, known in most circles as the one-time Kingpin of Crime. "And to know that man is to know the capability of the unbridled human will over the limitations of the human condition."

"Continue," uttered the more garishly clad of the pair - Mysterio, the costumed illusionist, known primarily for the opaque dome that hid his face and head. The synthetic smoke that emanated from hidden exhausts within his cape faded into the slight fog that rose off the dank Hudson River.

"Very well, then." Fisk cracked his neck slightly, going out of his way to *not* look upon his own reflection within the surface of Mysterio's helm. "The ten thousand dollar version of the life of the Man Without Fear."

"His name is Matthew Murdock," sighed the Kingpin, wincing as he compromised what he considered to be the most valuable, heretofore confidential information in his network of intelligence. "He is the son of a pugilist."

"A boxer?"

"Yes - a punch-drunk palooka, whose wife had abandoned the pair when Murdock himself was but an infant. John Murdock made what meager living he and his son were forced to sustain themselves on in the rings of the Hell's Kitchen ghetto where they resided, donning the title 'Battlin' Jack'."

"And he taught his son to fight as well?"

"Quite the contrary. He insisted his son devote himself wholly to an education that would one day rescue him from the New York slums. But young Matthew quickly learned that - in the vicious world of youth - brawn, not brains, rules the day. He was thrashed regularly by any bully with a crowd to impress, taunted with the moniker of 'Daredevil'. It is, presumably, the formative experience from which he drew the name of his alter ego."

"Presumably."

"So, like his father before him, Matt Murdock trained to fight - albeit secretly, so as not to raise his father's ire. He took to innocent mischief as well, offering the crime-fed constabulary of the Kitchen a run for their money."

BATTLIN' JACK
MURDOCK
OCT 8
MADISON
SQUARE
GARDEN
STEVE
DILLON
'99

But innocence is only sweetest when it's lost. And lose it Matt Murdock did in the following year.

"As fate would have it, the lad lived up to the name his enemies used to deride him, when an out-of-control truck carrying toxic waste found an elderly man in its path. With little thought for his own safety, the young Matt Murdock hurled himself at the senior citizen, knocking him out of harm's way.

"It is an act of heroism I often wonder if I would have been capable of - given the same events and circumstances.

"However, no good deed goes unrewarded. And for his act of selflessness, Matthew Murdock was offered a radioactive isotope to the eyes - one so powerful, it seared his ocular nerves, blinding him instantly, and forever."

"He's blind?!" Mysterio interrupted, incredulously.

"As justice," Kingpin countered, and then added, amusing himself, "or rather, a bribed judge."

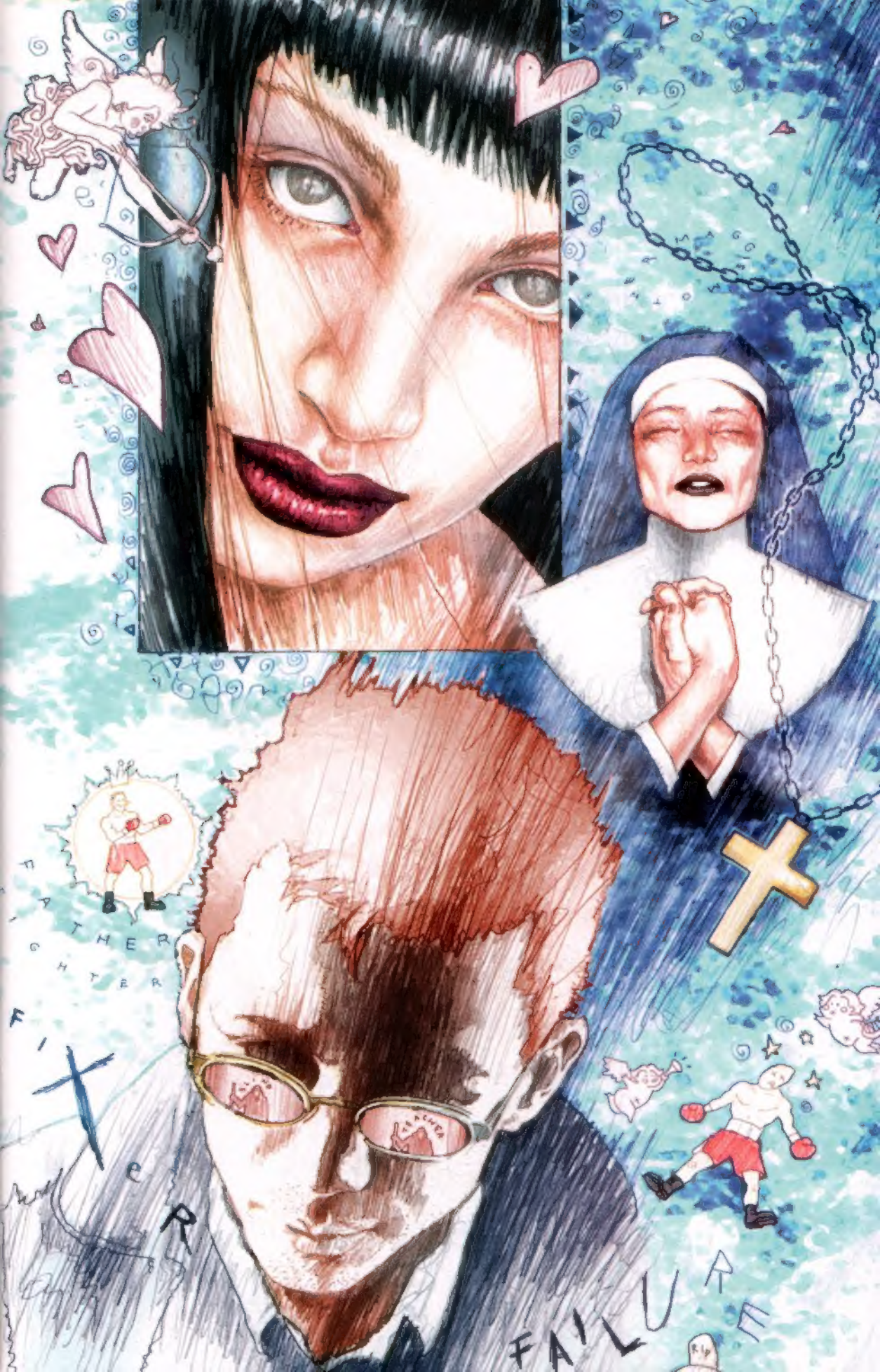
"Incredible. But his capabilities! I've fought the man myself!"

"The same isotope that robbed him of one sense heightened the four remaining. His aural sense is unnaturally acute, his olfactory sense rivals that of the oldest shark at sea, his tactile sense allows him to read the raised ink on newsprint. I don't know if the isotope affected his speech, but there are lowly thugs who've come and gone in my employ who insist he can belt out a sonar screech. One, in particular - name of Turk - offered that little apocryphal nugget, though I'd wager Turk's powers of observation rely less on what he sees or hears and more on what will gain him employment.

"Training him to use his gifts was a nomad called Stick. We don't know much about him."

"But his newfound abilities weren't enough to save his doomed father. After reneging on an agreement to take a dive, the boxer was ordered assassinated by a low-level thug called the Fixer. The death of his father would help drive Murdock's irritatingly noble thirst for justice.

"And drive him it did - not just physically, but also academically. He enrolled at Columbia University, and excelled in his study of the law. But more than provide him the tools with which he'd eventually build his public persona as a lawyer, college offered Matt Murdock two of the most predominant figures in his adult life: Franklin Nelson, who'd eventually become Murdock's flunky partner, and Elektra Natchios the Greek stunner who'd grow up to be a cunning, deadly assassin."


FATHER
FIGHTER
FAILURE
R.I.P

But that was years away. First and foremost for Matt Murdock was establishing an identity with which he could dispense vigilante justice outside his chosen profession. He settled on the unfortunate 'Daredevil', and the even more unfortunate yellow and red costume that dominated his early costumed career."

"I've seen photos of that outfit," shuddered the illusionist. "No style. No panache."

The Kingpin avoided the effortless setup afforded him by the figure in the green leotard, purple cape, and fishbowl helmet, and continued. "For most of his career, he wore the red suit that most are familiar with. There was a time when he adopted an armored gray outfit, radically different from his traditional togs. But - as with most costume changes within the tights-toting community - it didn't last."

PALMIOTTI '99
&
K·NOWLAN

And so it went, for many years - costumed vigilante by night, high-priced yet idealistic legal hotshot by day. Like a welcomed albatross around his neck, Murdock chose to partner up with Nelson - a man I found superfluous to the firm even though court and societal wags seem to differ in opinion. But it's Murdock's unflinching loyalty - not the fact that Nelson is aware of the dual identity - that keeps the pair together. Even years later, when Nelson's biological mother resurfaced and turned out to be fellow legal shark Rosalind Sharpe, the Nelson and Murdock partnership endured, simply being absorbed into Sharpe's own firm."

"Why do you think he allowed Nelson's name to go above his, if Murdock is the true draw of the firm? It's not even an alphabetical listing."

"Who knows why people invite or allow incongruity into their otherwise ordered microcosms? Perhaps on whimsy? Perhaps because life's too short to lose sleep over such trivialities as whose name belongs first on a door. But it was that quality, I believe, that also enabled Matt Murdock to cross that professional line and fall in love with his secretary - Karen Page."

"The radio personality?"

"And one-time adult film star. But we'll touch on that later.

"Yes - Murdock fell for Page, and vice versa. Theirs was a banal affair, that most make more out of in retrospect than in the moment. But they *did* love one another - such as it was. And it was a love that afforded Murdock purchase from the raging sea that was his life as Daredevil."

NELS
MUR
ROMITA/PALMIOTTI '11

He has his own rogues' gallery, that - while not the most impressive - does merit respect within the criminal community. Anyone who can best Bullseye warrants caution. And while he's had to share a nemesis or two with other costumed adventurers, Daredevil's never been at a loss for those who would end him, if given half the chance.

"There was Stilt-Man, the Owl, Copperhead, The Gladiator - who actually reformed for a time and did costume work for his former foe. He's fought Mr. Hyde, and interestingly enough, also *defended* the beast as well - in court, as Murdock.

"There was the insane harpy Typhoid Mary, whom Daredevil would alternately sleep with and bring to justice - depending on his state of psychosis."

"Psychosis?" This intrigued Mysterio.

"One doesn't hurl themselves off roofs and put their lives at risk without being at least *a little* crazy - would you agree?"

"I suppose."

"Factor that to the tenth power, and that's Murdock. He's spent time on both sides of the couch, shall we say. May I continue? Your time's growing short."

"Please."

"Let's see - there was the aforementioned assassin, Elektra, his former lover. She surfaced in my employ and faced her onetime boyfriend once or twice.

"Then there was the other assassin, Bullseye, who would deal Daredevil the second most crushing blow of his career.

"I would later deal him the first, of course."

"And how did you do that, Wilson?"

"All things in due time, sir. Patience."

"You see, it was the culmination of his life's work that led him to be broken before me," Fisk reminisced. "Whether it was the affairs he shared with the one time Russian spy-turned-Avenger Natasha Romanov - more commonly known as the Black Widow - or his team-ups with our more predominant and celebrated mutual foe, Spider-Man..."

"Ah yes - the Arachnid..."

"...Murdock was sinking ever further into my machinations. I thought for sure he'd snap when that lunatic Bullseye gutted his former paramour Elektra..."

"I'd *heard* he was responsible for that," Mysterio recalled.

"However, our boy Murdock proved sturdier than Gibraltar itself. I could never pinpoint exactly why he was so single-minded in his pursuit of justice - whether it was due to his Christian upbringing, or the dissolution of his family at such a young age."

"You think his faith has much to do with who he is?" The notion began to take root in Mysterio's subconscious.

"Doesn't everyone's?" The Kingpin looked out over the Hudson and thought, as he often did, about God and his own conscience. "Religion is what keeps us going. And I'm not talking about the traditional definition of religion here - I'm talking about one's *personal* religion. Whether it be money and power, like my own, or what I can only imagine is yours - drama and greed. Our religion fuels us. Murdock's seems to be equal parts of that good, old-time religion that's slung at the faithful in the Sunday pews and the desire to right the wrongs visited upon him as a child. It's sad, really."

"But not nearly as sad as the religion that brought poor Karen Page to indignity, prostitution of self and soul, and betrayal of the only truly good man she'd ever known."

"And what religion was that?"

"The religion of heroin."

The junkie, Karen Page, provided the missing piece in the puzzle that vexed me for so long: how to rid myself of Daredevil. In this instance, the junkie illuminated the sober by writing four words that would forever alter the terrain of crime and justice on the east coast, as well as the lives of all involved in what became a passion play of mixed results."

"And those four words were...?"

"'Matt Murdock is Daredevil'." Kingpin recalled it with the enthusiasm of a schoolchild who's deciphered a difficult equation on their own. "Suddenly, I knew that I could never destroy Daredevil. I wouldn't have to. All I had to do was dash *Murdock* on the rock of calculated misfortune and madness.

"And I did exactly that, deconstructing his life from the inside out, destroying all he knew to be safe and sane without ever leaving my inner sanctum, drawing him nearer and nearer, until - in the midst of his mania - he was able to discern that *I* was at the epicenter of his calamity."

"And did he exact revenge?"

"He tried, then. He appeared before me and attempted to kill me. I thrashed him. I broke him. I beat him within an inch of his vitals.

"It remains, perhaps, the greatest moment in my criminal career."

They fell into a momentary silence, Kingpin lost in a fond memory, with only the ebbing tide of the harbor and the low hum of the battery pack that powered the circuitry in Mysterio's costume permeating the quiet. Then...

"But he prevailed in the end, I take it."

No grand descriptions from Wilson Fisk now. Only a terse "Yes."

The rest is a matter of public record," Kingpin offered after a long moment (after all - he was being paid for his time). "He toppled my empire. He's fought Fear and Typhoid. He's moved his legal practice inside that of Sharpe's, as I mentioned before, and he's found love, renewed, in the arms of the woman who very nearly destroyed him."

"Turn the other cheek, the Christians say."

"That they do. And taking a page from their Good Book, I, too, shall be offering you my other cheek, as I bid you adieu and take my leave of you. I trust I've satisfied my end of the transaction?"

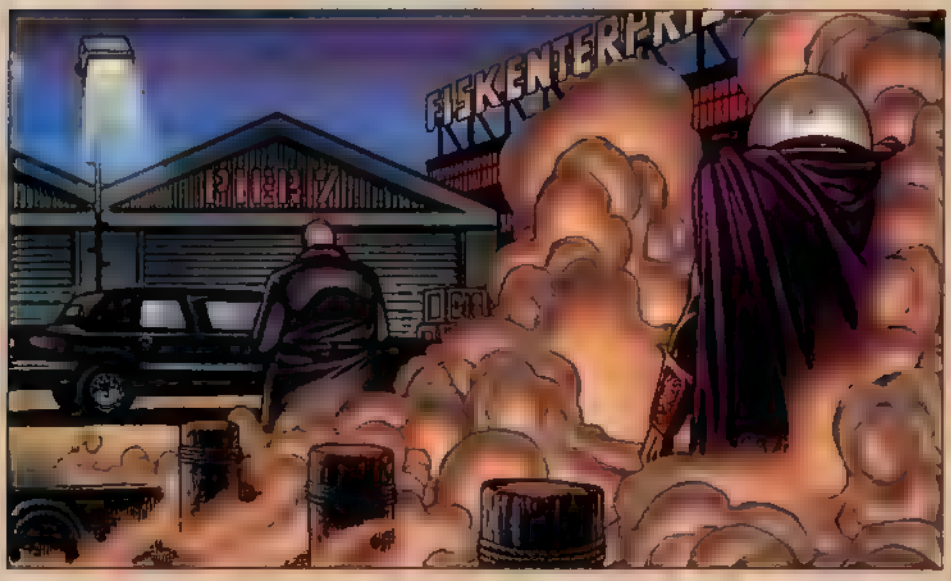
You have, Wilson. Your money waits in the trunk of your car." Mysterio ignited the jets that emitted his signature smoke. He couldn't resist adding "Don't spend it all in one place."

"If I was a betting man, "Fisk smiled, "I'd wager a bought precinct that you embarrass yourself with this 'campaign' of yours and receive the beating of your life from Daredevil in the process."

"The beating of my life," Mysterio chuckled, finding the humor in some private joke. "In losing, then, I'd win. Good night, Wilson."

With that, the Kingpin of Crime headed toward his waiting lift back to his broken empire, and the illusionist Mysterio disappeared into the man-made fog.

The Beginning...



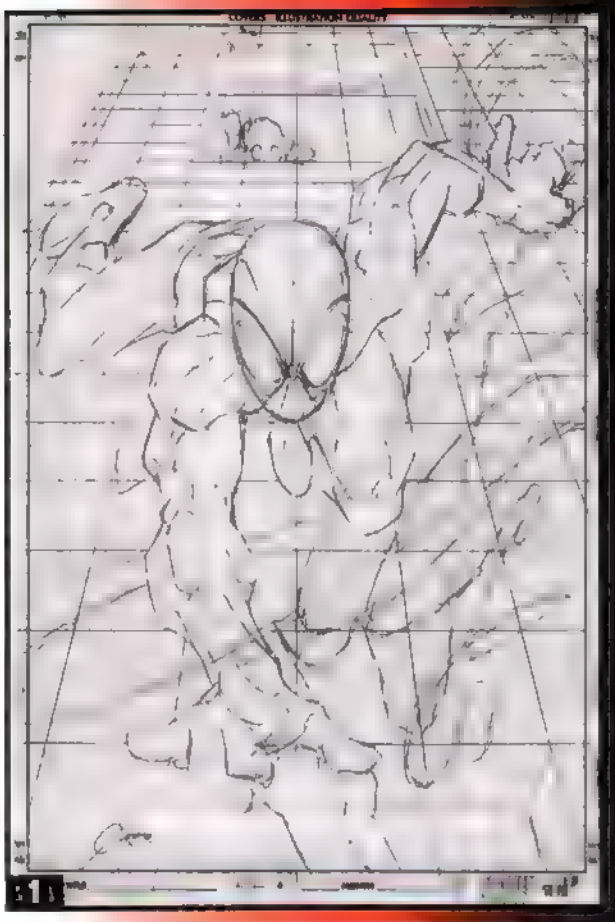
Design by Jeffery R. Suter

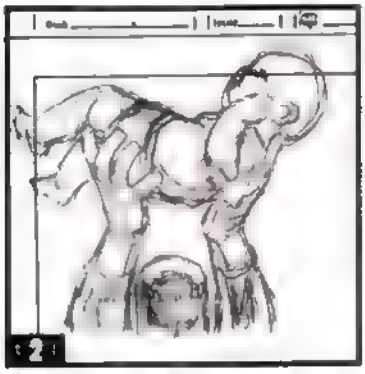
DAREDEVIL® sketchbook

HEY THERE, MARVEL KNIGHTLITES!

THE WACKY FOLKS AT *WIZARD* ASKED ME TO SHOW YOU SWANKY, WAY-SPANKY, COOL FANS SOME OF THE TORTURE THAT I PUT MYSELF THROUGH BEFORE ACTUALLY PENCILING A COVER. WELL, HERE YOU HAVE IT. KEEP IN MIND I USUALLY DO A LAYOUT FOR EVERY PAGE AND COVER AT EXACTLY PRINT SIZE. ENOUGH OF ME BABBLING AWAY...LET'S MOVE ON TO THE MADNESS!

1: THIS IS WHAT THE COVER TO THE GLORIOUS #1/2 THAT YOU NOW HOLD IN YOUR GRUBBY LITTLE PAWS ORIGINALLY LOOKED LIKE. IT'S A SPIDEY SKETCH THAT I DID FOR A FILM CREW FROM "ACCESS HOLLYWOOD." NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE EVER-LOOMING DEADLINE FOR THIS #1/2 FORCED ME INTO MODIFYING IT SLIGHTLY AND TURNING IT INTO OL' HORNHEAD.

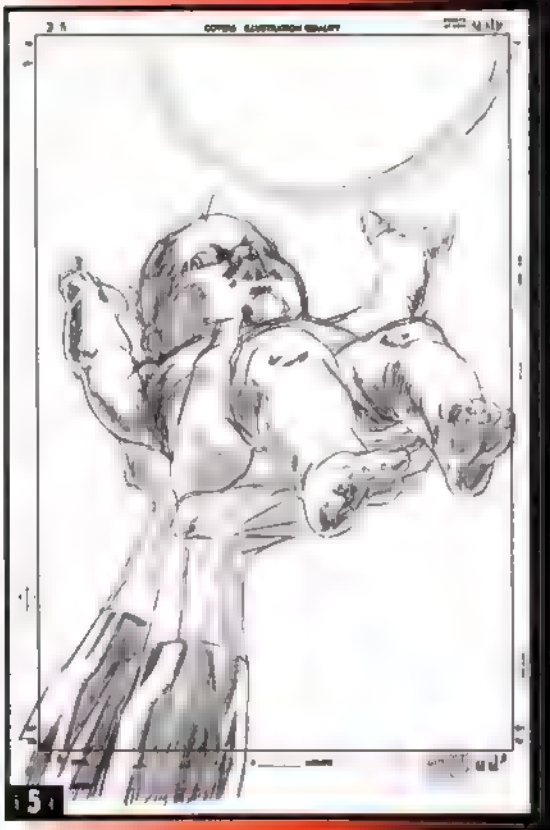


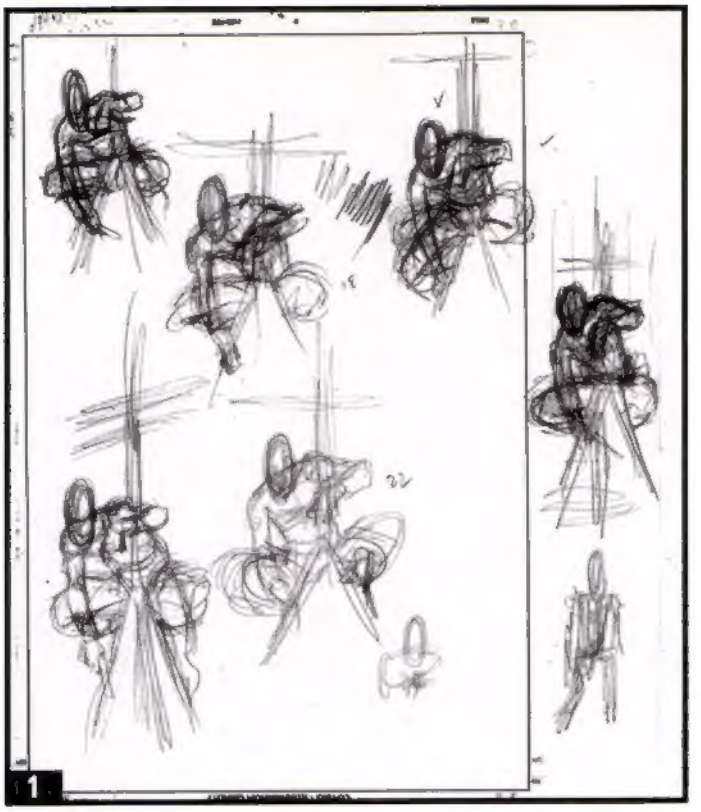


2, 3: SEVERAL DIFFERENT STUDIES FOR MY PERSONAL FAVORITE, THE COVER OF *DD* #2.

4: ONCE I DECIDED ON A DESIGN, I WENT TO A TIGHT THUMBNAIL...

5: ...THEN A TIGHT LAYOUT.





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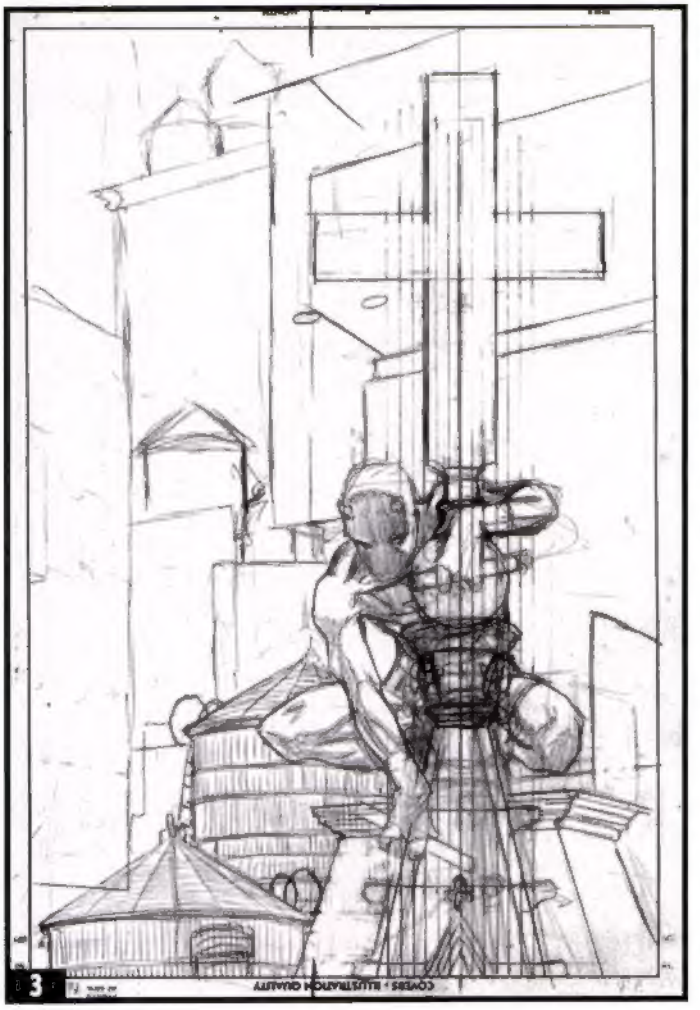


3

1: QUICK FIGURE STUDIES FOR WHAT WAS TO BE THE COVER TO *DD* #3.

2: ANOTHER MORE-DETAILED STUDY.

3: AND FINALLY, A TIGHTER LAYOUT DELINEATING SOME OF THE EVENTUAL BACKGROUND.

4: LAYOUT FOR THE COVER OF *DD* #5. AS YOU CAN SEE, I STARTED THE FIGURE *WAAAAAAAY* TOO LOW ON THE PAGE. THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF DOING THINGS IN LAYOUT FORM FIRST; I JUST MOVE IT UP ON THE ACTUAL BOARD AND LIGHT-BOX IT INTO PLACE.

5

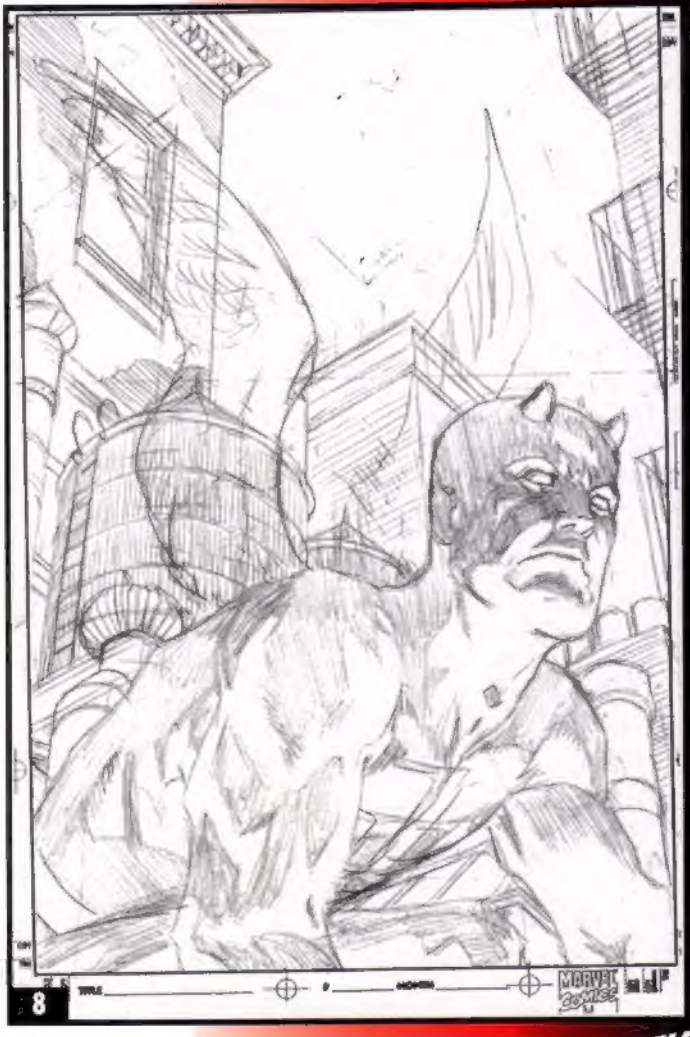
7

6

5, 6: THESE ARE PRELIMINARY IDEAS FOR THE FIRST *DD* TRADE, COMPILING ISSUES #1-#3.

7: THIS WAS AN IDEA THAT HIT ME A DAY OR SO LATER.

8: I THEN PENCILED A LARGER, MORE-DETAILED VERSION OF THE THUMBNAIL, AND CONSEQUENTLY WENT WITH THIS DESIGN.



8

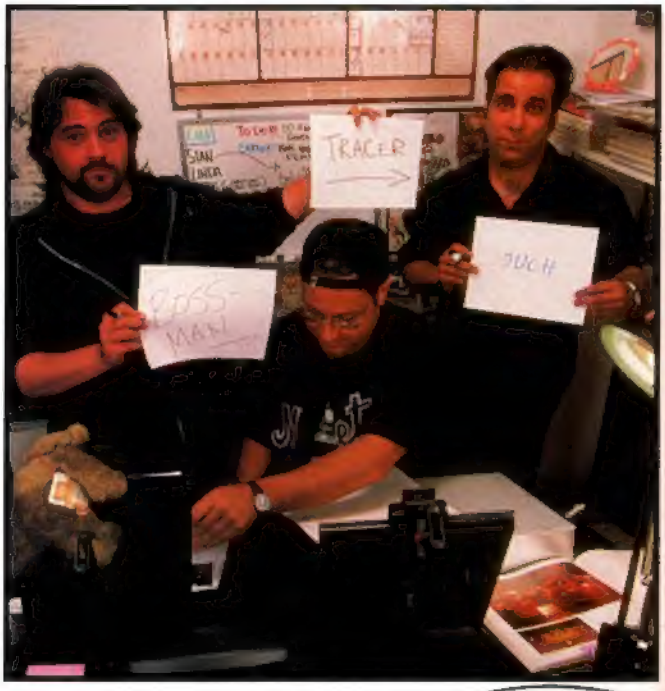
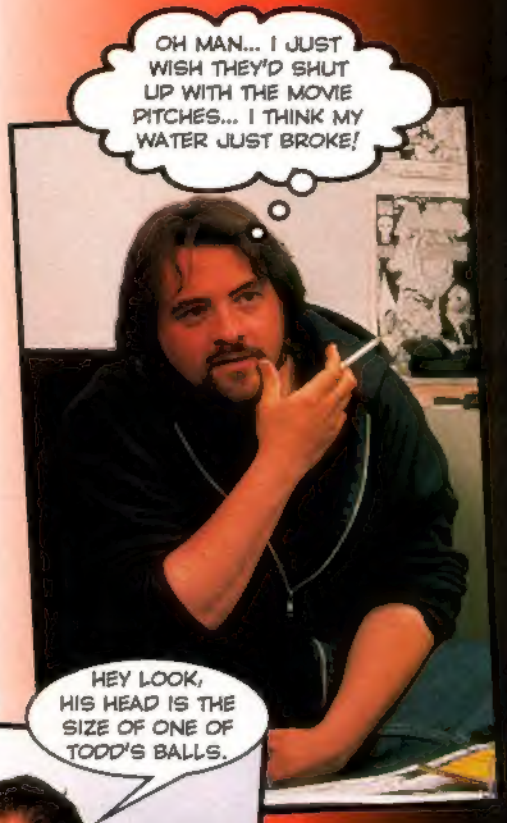
1: THUMBNAIL FOR *DD* #6. THIS THUMBNAIL WAS TIGHT ENOUGH FOR ME TO XEROX UP 200% AND LIGHT-BOX IT RIGHT ONTO THE BOARD.

2: LAYOUT FOR AMERICAN ENTERTAINMENT'S ALTERNATE COVER TO THE "MARVEL KNIGHTS" TOUR BOOK.

3: THIS IS THE LAYOUT FOR THE SELDOM-SEEN ALTERNATE COVER TO *DD* #5. THIS IS ONE OF THOSE RARE OCCASIONS WHEN I ACTUALLY KNEW WHAT I WANTED AND WENT RIGHT TO A TIGHT LAYOUT.

6, 7: THIS IS THE LAYOUT FOR THE COVER OF *DD* #11. DAVID MACK GAVE ME A SKETCH CONCEPT AND THEN I RAN WITH IT.

4: LAYOUT FOR *WIZARD*'S "MK WAVE 2" SKETCHBOOK. THIS SKETCH LEFT ME WITH PLENTY OF ROOM, SO I MADE SURE TO ENLARGE THE IMAGE CONSIDERABLY CLOSER TO THE CROP LINES OF THE ACTUAL ART BOARD.

5: AND FINALLY, THE THUMBNAIL FOR THE COVER OF *DD* #7. THIS ONE WAS TIGHT ENOUGH TO GO STRAIGHT TO PENCILS.

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